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5-21-2021

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# Georgia Southern University Athletics



## Eagle Men's Soccer to Join MAC

Move effective for 2021 season

Men's Soccer

Posted: 5/21/2021 3:00:00 PM

**CLEVELAND, Ohio** – The Mid-American Conference (MAC) today announced the addition of Georgia Southern University and Georgia State University as affiliate members for men's soccer, beginning with the 2021-22 academic year.

With the addition of Georgia Southern and Georgia State, the MAC will have seven programs competing in men's soccer. Four full member institutions (Akron, Bowling Green, Northern Illinois and Western Michigan) will be joined by three affiliate members (Georgia Southern, Georgia State and West Virginia).

"I am pleased to welcome Georgia Southern University and Georgia State University as affiliate members in men's soccer," said MAC Commissioner Dr. Jon A. Steinbrecher. "Through the efforts of outstanding coaches and student-athletes, we have developed high expectations in the sport. I look forward to our newest members building upon and adding to the history and strength of the league."

Georgia State finished the 2020 season 9-2-2 and made a sixth-straight conference tournament championship game appearance before falling in penalty kicks last fall. The Panthers are led by head coach Brett Surrency who just finished his 11th season at the helm. Surrency has led Georgia State to nine or more wins in eight of his 11 seasons and is currently the second winningest coach (110 victories) in GSU men's soccer history. The Panthers have made four trips to the NCAA Tournament with the last coming in 2018 when the Panthers battled No. 14 Charlotte into penalty kicks (2-2, 3-0 PKs). The Georgia State men's soccer program dates back to 1967 with the program closing in on its 500th all-time win.

"We are grateful to Commissioner Steinbrecher, Senior Associate Commissioner for Championships & Sport Development Jeff Bacon, and the members of the MAC for welcoming in our men's soccer program," said Georgia State Director of Athletics Charlie Cobb. "The MAC has had a great deal of success in men's soccer throughout its history and I know Coach Surrency is looking forward to the challenge ahead of him of facing off against some great programs."

"We are really excited to join the MAC and compete with some historically great soccer programs," said Surrency. "Our program is thankful for the vision of Director of Athletics Charlie Cobb and our administration to find us a great home and what we feel like is another positive step for our program."

Georgia Southern joins the MAC after a successful seven-year stint in the Sun Belt Conference that was highlighted by the Eagles capturing the 2016 regular season title under Coach of the Year [John Murphy](#). In all, the Eagles had 26 All-Sun Belt Conference players in those seven seasons. Previously, the Eagles played in the SoCon and the TAAC (precursor to the Atlantic Sun) and Georgia Southern student-athletes have earned 14 major awards from those three leagues in program history. Georgia Southern men's soccer plays home matches on Eagle Field at Erk Russell Park on the Statesboro campus, also the home of USL League One's Tormenta FC.

"We are always striving for what's best for all 17 of our sports and making the move to the MAC for men's soccer helps us meet our goal to compete on a national level," Georgia Southern Director of Athletics [Jared Benko](#) said. "We are honored to be a part of such a great conference and I want to thank Commissioner Steinbrecher and the MAC officials for extending the affiliate invitation. This move will only strengthen our program and assist in reaching our program goals."

"This is an exciting day for our program. I'm very pleased that Georgia Southern men's soccer is joining the MAC, and we look forward to being part of such an ambitious championship starting this fall," Murphy said. "Our program is grateful for the hard work that has been done behind the scenes, particularly here on campus from our departmental and university leadership. Additionally, I would also like to highlight our appreciation to the MAC administrators and my fellow conference coaches. Their foresight and drive to make this the best men's soccer conference possible are admirable. In the years to come, we will strive to contribute further to the excellent reputation that MAC men's soccer has earned thus far. We look forward to a very competitive championship moving forward."

Since the 2009 season, MAC Men's Soccer programs have enjoyed profound success on the national level -- highlighted by five College Cup appearances, 17 MLS first round draft picks and Akron taking home the NCAA National Championship title in 2010.

For more men's soccer information, please visit [GetSomeMACtion.com](http://GetSomeMACtion.com) or follow us on Twitter at [@MACSports](https://twitter.com/MACSports).

#### **MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE**

Founded in 1946, the Mid-American Conference is an NCAA Division I, 12-member conference that sponsors 24 championships and is one of 10 members of the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS). With total enrollment of nearly 300,000 students, the league represents institutions of higher learning in five states - Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, and Ohio.

Current MAC schools and the year they joined are -- East Division: University of Akron (1992), Bowling Green State University (1952), University at Buffalo (1998), Kent State University (1951), Miami University (1947), Ohio University (1946). West Division: Ball State University (1973), Central Michigan University (1971), Eastern Michigan University (1971), Northern Illinois University (1975-86, rejoined in 1997), University of Toledo (1950), Western Michigan University (1947). The conference office is based in Cleveland, Ohio.

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